

**External Affairs**  
**Emergency Support Function #15**  
**Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan**

**Lead Agency:** Office of the Governor

**Supporting Departments/Agencies:** All state agencies and offices, volunteer organizations, professional associations, and private entities.

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of public information is to establish uniform policies for the effective development, coordination, and dissemination of information to the public in the event of a disaster. The ESF also describes the means, organization, and process by which a jurisdiction provides timely, accurate, and useful information and instructions to area residents throughout an emergency.

**II. SCOPE**

- A. Emergency public information actions before, during, and following any emergency will be determined by the severity of the emergency as declared by involved jurisdictions, State agencies, or as perceived by the public. A significant emergency public information response will involve many State, local, and private sector agencies. Public Information identifies those agencies and their responsibilities.
- B. For the purpose of this annex, Public Information Officers (PIO's) will represent their own agency and speak about their agency's involvement in response and recovery operations in an event-driven environment. The Governor's Press Secretary, through the Joint Information System (JIS), using the Colorado Division of Emergency Management (DEM) PIO as the central point of contact for the initial JIS, shall be kept informed about all participating agency news and information releases throughout response and recovery operations.
- C. This annex provides for public information, education, and media relations functions incorporating a Joint Information System (JIS) as the information source and Joint Information Center (JIC) operations, either from the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), at a media center set up at the site of the incident, or a Joint Field Office as the contact point for information delivery.

- D. Resource requirements, including staffing, equipment, office supplies, and office facilities required will be tailored to the type and magnitude of each specific disaster and full, or partial activation of this plan will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### **III. SITUATION**

- A. The public needs timely and accurate information for protection of life and property during response to, and recovery from a disaster or emergency situation.
- B. To reduce inaccuracies and misinformation, the State will initiate a Joint Information System (JIS) to coordinate information with participating local, State, and Federal agencies. Based on the urgency of the situation and the need for inter-agency cooperation, agencies should attempt to coordinate emergency public information through the Governor's Office.
- C. Local jurisdictions will provide immediate and vital information to the public regarding response and recovery activities.
- D. At no time will a news release from any State agency conflict with news releases from local government.
- E. Under the JIS/JIC concept, each agency representative has the commitment to share and coordinate information with all other participating agencies prior to its release to the media and public.
- F. The Governor's Office has lead responsibility as the official spokesperson for State actions.
- G. A virtual JIC may be initiated through technological means when geographical restrictions, incident management requirements, and other limitations preclude physical attendance by public information officers/liaisons at a central location.
- H. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) may be utilized by the State and/or local jurisdictions to broadcast a public alert to specific jurisdictions. For more information regarding EAS see the ESF #2 Communications.

### **IV. Concept of Operations**

The following systems and procedures will be applicable to the response and recovery phase of any disaster or emergency situation.

- A. In a disaster, the Multi-Agency Coordination Center/State Emergency Operations Center (MACC/SEOC), within the Division of Emergency Management, becomes the focal point for the receipt of information and therefore, is a logical location for the preparation and distribution of emergency public information if so deemed by the Governor's Office.
- B. The Director of the DEM, in conjunction with the Governor's Office, will appoint or designate a Lead Emergency Public Information Officer to coordinate the release emergency public information through the JIS, and to the public through the media.
- C. A Joint Information Center (JIC) may be established by the DEM in the MACC/SEOC. Involvement of other agency/organization Public Information Officers will be determined by the scope and nature of the disaster. The JIS will continue with the establishment of the JIC.
- D. The JIC becomes the focal point for dissemination of all emergency public information about emergency and disaster response and recovery operations. This will reduce or eliminate negative information that may arise and ensure emergency and disaster information is delivered to the citizens of the State of Colorado.
- E. JIC PIO's are responsible for setting-up news briefings for key disaster officials, writing and disseminating news releases to appropriate media outlets, monitoring and analyzing TV, radio, and newspaper disaster-news coverage and providing this information to the JIS, and preparing background information and fact sheets.
- F. PIO's in the JIC work closely with elected officials, response agencies, and emergency managers.
- G. The Media Room, adjacent to the MACC/SEOC will be used for news briefings, interviews, and press conferences.
- H. If a Presidential Declaration has been made, the JIC may be expanded to include Federal resources.

## **V. Organization & Responsibilities**

### **A. Lead PIO**

- 1. Initial actions for the DEM PIO following the notification of an incident will be notification of the Governor's Press Secretary to:

- a. identify a Lead PIO, and
  - b. to discuss involvement of PIO's from concerned agencies and through mutual agreement determine their level of involvement in JIS/JIC operations.
2. During this phase, the Lead PIO and all concerned agency PIO's will jointly craft news releases and determine input and release procedures for the JIS according to the needs of the emergency or disaster situation. As a part of this communication process, the JIS will function to serve communities identified as the affected audiences and establish contact with media outlets necessary to reach those audiences.
3. The Lead PIO serves as the coordinator for public information and is responsible for developing and distributing all approved media information to the EAS, news media, rumor control, and/or any other organizations deemed necessary to receive the news advisories.
4. The Lead PIO serves as the State EOC representative for news and advisory issues in conjunction with the Governor's Press Secretary.
5. The Lead PIO ensures appropriate State elected officials, legislators, and members of Congress who represent areas affected by the emergency or disaster are apprised of issues related to response and recovery. This will be done in conjunction with the Governor's Office.
6. Coordinate the management of the State's emergency public information response through all phases of an emergency or disaster.
7. Ensure coordination of information and press briefings with Governor's Office.
8. Provide information on the emergency or disaster, its impact on the State, State response actions, and agency support being provided to local jurisdictions and State response agencies. This will be done in cooperation and collaboration with the Governor's Office.
9. Provide information on recovery programs designed to return, if possible, to its pre-incident condition. This will be

done in cooperation and collaboration with the Governor's Office.

10. Ensure that an Incident Action Plan is developed for each operational period and that it is coordinated with the EOC Operations Officer and Information and Planning.
11. Collect and maintain the following ESF status information and coordinate with Information and Planning to ensure inclusion into the Situation Report (SITREP):
  - a. Media releases issued.
  - b. Schedule of press conferences and releases.
  - c. Unmet needs.
  - d. Major Public Information issues/activities.
12. Communicate and address staffing and resource shortfalls.

#### **B. Support & Response Agencies**

1. Provide subject matter experts for media interviews and press conferences, as requested and appropriate.
2. Provide departmental public information and public education support, as requested, to the Lead Public Information Officer during an emergency or disaster.
3. Provide staffing for media support and monitoring.

#### **V. Appendixes**

- A. State Agency PIO Contact Lists (Confidential)
- B. Denver Metro Media List (Confidential)
- C. Statewide Media List (Confidential)